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CHAPTER X.

CONJECTURES WHY THE ABIPONES TAKE THE EVIL SPIRIT FOR THEIR GRANDFATHER, AND THE PLEIADES FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF HIM.

776 When you read that the Abipones take the devil for their grandfather, you may laugh with me at their folly, and behold their madness with pity and wonder, but, if you be wise, let all this be done in moderation, for still grosser errors have been entertained amongst many nations civilized by laws and arts both human and divine. If you do but look into history sacred or profane, you will allow that there is scarce any thing to which divine honours have not formerly been paid. Such madness and folly in many polished nations should so exhaust our indignation and wonder as to make us judge mildly of the savage Abipones, educated amongst wild beasts, and unacquainted with letters, if they simply dignify the evil spirit with the title of their grandfather, without giving him the name or honours of a divinity. During a seven-years' residence amongst the savages, I never discovered any thing of that nature. If secretly or in our absence they did any thing which a divine would condemn, I

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CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE ABIPONES.

THE multitude and variety of tongues spoken, in Paraguay alone, exceeds alike belief and calculation. Nor should you imagine that they vary only in dialect. Most of them are radically different. Truly admirable is their varied structure, of which no rational person can suppose these stupid savages to have been the architects and inventors. Led by this consideration, I have often affirmed that the variety and artful construction of languages should be reckoned amongst the other arguments to prove the existence of an eternal and omniscient God. The Jesuits have given religious instructions to fourteen nations of Paraguay, and widely propagated the Christian faith, in fourteen different languages. They did not each understand them all, but every one was well acquainted with two or three, namely, those of the nations amongst whom they had lived. Of the number of these was I, who spent seven years amongst the Abipones, eleven amongst the Guaranies. The nations for whom we laboured, and for whom founded colonies, were the Guaranies,

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114 Chiquitos, Mocobios, Abipones, Tobas, Malbalaes, Vilelas, Passaines, Lules, Isistines, Homoampas, Chunipies, Mataguayos, Chiriguanes, Lenguas or Guaycurùs, Mbayas, Pampas, Serranos, Patagones, and Yarós. Moreover, the Guichua language, which is peculiar to the whole of Peru, and very familiar to Negro slaves, to the lower orders amongst the Spaniards, and even to matrons of the higher ranks in Tucuman, was used by many of the Jesuits, both in preaching and confession. Different languages were spoken too in the towns of the Chiquitos, which were composed of very different nations. The languages of the Abipones, Mocobios, and Tobas, certainly have all one origin, and are as much alike as Spanish and Portugueze. Yet they differ not only in dialect, but also in innumerable little words. The same may be said of the Tonocotè language, in use amongst the Lules and Isistines. The language of the Chiriguanes and Guaranies, who live full five hundred leagues apart, is the same, with the exception of a few words, which may be easily learnt in the course of two or three weeks by any one who understands either of them.

114 Many writers upon America have interspersed sentences of the Indian languages into their histories; but, good Heavens! how utterly de-

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fective and corrupted! They have scarce left a letter unmutilated. But these writers are excusable, for they have drawn their information from corrupted sources. Without having even entered America, they insert into their journals the words of savage languages, the meaning and pronunciation of which they are totally ignorant of. Hence it is that the American names of places, rivers, trees, plants, and animals, are so wretchedly mutilated in all books, that we can hardly read them without laughter. Spanish children, by constantly conversing with Indians of their own age, imbibe a correct knowledge of the Indian languages, which, to grown-up persons, is a business both of time and labour. I have known adults who, after conversing many years with the Indians, uttered as many errors as syllables. It is difficult for a European to accustom his tongue to the strange and distorted words which the savages pronounce so fast and indistinctly, hissing with their tongues, snoring with their nostrils, grinding with their teeth, and gurgling with their throats; so that you seem to hear the sound of ducks quacking in a pond, rather than the voices of men talking. Learned men had long wished that a person who understood some American language would clearly expound the system, construction, and whole anatomy of it:

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both wanting. There were, indeed, Spaniards who, having been taken captives by the Abipones in their boyhood, had learnt the Abiponian tongue, but they had generally forgotten the language of their own country; while those who fell in captivity amongst the savages, after they had grown up, had learnt their language so ill that they scarce spoke a word without blundering. By degrees they forget their own language, but are incapable of properly acquiring any other. The same may be said in regard to the Abipones, who have returned to their own people after being for some time captives amongst the Spaniards. You will, therefore, sooner learn to err than to speak from the captives. But if we were able to hire any one of them to instruct us who was tolerably well acquainted with both languages, Good heavens! what troubles had we not to undergo! When asked what the Abipones called such or such a thing, he would reply in so low and dubious a tone, that we were not able to distinguish a syllable, or even a letter. If we asked him to repeat the same word two or three times over, he grew angry, and would not speak. Scarce was the hour of instruction ended, when he required the reward for the few words he has pronounced: one day a knife; the next a pair of scissars; the next glass-beads; the next

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something of more value. If we denied him what he asked, he would never visit us again; if we gave it, he was daily emboldened to ask things of still more value. Great is the misery of the scholar when masters are either scarce or too dear. I do not deny that, by daily conversation with the Indians, I learnt the names of those things which are present to the eyes; but invisible things, which relate to God and the soul, can only be learnt by conjecture and very long use. When horses, tigers, or arms, are talked of, you will find any of the Abipones a Demosthenes or a Tully: if the question turn on the affections and functions of the mind, and the practice of virtue, they will either give you answers darker than night, or remain silent.

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When we were studying the Guarany tongue, grammars and three dictionaries were published by Fathers Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, and Paulo Restivo, a Sicilian, which saved us a great deal of time and labour. By their assistance our progress was so much accelerated that, at the end of three months, we were permitted to confess the Guaranies by order of four of the older Jesuits, who, at the command of the superiors, closely examined our knowledge in the language. But as the assistance of books was wanting amongst the Abipones, Joseph Brigniel made up for the deficiency by

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all possible arts and industry. If any new word or elegance could be gathered from the conversation of the savages, he carefully wrote it down, and at length composed a dictionary, which, in course of time, grew to a hundred and fifty sheets. It was afterwards copied out, corrected, and considerably enriched by members of our society. It is easy to add to what is begun; for the successors, sitting on the shoulders of those that preceded them, see farther, and more than they. Pizarro penetrated into Peru, and Cortez into Mexico, but not till Columbus, who first saw America, had shown them the way. The Jesuit Brigniel first discovered the track to be pursued amid the dim shades of a savage language, made himself a guide to the rest, and, to express myself in few words, merits eternal fame for having kindled a light amidst darkness, by pointing out the rude lineaments of grammar rules.

The Abiponian language is involved in new difficulties by a ridiculous custom which the savages have of continually abolishing words common to the whole nation, and substituting new ones in their stead. Funeral rites are the origin of this custom. The Abipones do not like that any thing should remain to remind them of the dead. Hence appellative words bearing any affinity with the names of the de-

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000 living between the Apa and Ypané Rivers, and the other (300 people) near the range of the Nogona and Nebatena hills (lat. 21° S.). A few years later, the two *Cadiueo* bands of Fuerte Olimpo, which numbered 300 and 380 respectively, settled near Coimbra in the Matto Grosso.

During the 19th century, the *Cadiueo* ranged between the Rio Branco and the Miranda River, but the local ranchers seised part of their territory and made several attempts to exterminate them. At the beginning of the 20th century, the *Cadiueo* were granted full possession of an area bounded on the north by the Nabileque River, on the west by the Paraguay River, on the south by the Aquidauana River, and on the east by the Serra Bodoquena and by the Niutaque River, a tributary of the Nabileque River. In 1937 the last *Cadiueo*, totaling about 150, were divided among three settlements, the most important of which is Nalique. They are gradually being assimilated into the Brazilian rural population.

In the 18th century, the *Guetiadegodi* (*Guetcadegue, Guatiadeo, Uatadeo, Ouaitiodeko, Ua-tec-te-uo, Oleo*), or "Bush Dwellers," were the northernmost *Mbayá* subgroup in the Chaco. Their territory was somewhat to the east of the *Chiquito* mission of Sagrado Corazon, on the Mandiy River. They often molested the *Chiquito* converts, who defeated them in 1763 and took a great many prisoners to the missions. In 1766 a *Guetiadegodi* band seceded to form an independent band under their former chief's brother. Aguirre (1911, p. 312) places them in 1793 at lat. 20°30′ S., east of the Paraguay River. They numbered about 500, and were then living on the banks of the Paraguay River, having abandoned their equestrian existence to become boatmen and fishermen. In the middle of the 19th century, their remaining groups had settled as farmers near Albuquerque.

The *Apocachodegodegi* (*Apocachodegue, Apocaichudeko, Pacajudeus, Apocatcho-e-tuo*) roamed from the Jejuy River to the Apa River, but generally camped either near the Aquidabán-thi River or the Apa River. Until 1760 they frequently returned to their former habitat in the Chaco. These Indians were also called *Mbayá-mirim* (*Small Mbayá*) to distinguish them from the *Mbayá-guazú* (*Large Mbayá*) of the Chaco, and *Belenistas* because the mission of Nuestra Señora de Belen was founded among them. In 1793 they numbered about 600, and consisted of 7 small bands under a supreme chief. Today they have entirely disappeared.

The *Lichagotegodi* (*Ichagotegue, Xaguetéo, Chagoteo*), or "People of the Red Earth," were concentrated in the region of the lower Apa River (lat. 22° or 21°30′ S.) somewhat west of the *Apocachodegodegi* and south of the Pão de Assucar. When they were missionized between 1769 and 1774, they numbered about 400.

The *Eyibogodegi* (*Echiguegue, Tchiguebo, Eijého, Ejueo, Enacagá*), or the "Hidden Ones," had one of their main camps near the Rio Branco, northeast of Pão de Assucar. This group, the largest *Mbayá* subtribe, consisted of three bands. In the middle of the 19th century, they were established near Albuquerque.

The *Gotocogegodegi* (*Guocotegodi, Ocotegueguo, Cotoguéo, Cotogueho, Cutuguco, Yenteguebo*), or "Those of the Arrows Region," were a small group east of the *Eyibogodegi* in the hills at the headwaters of the Rio Branco. In 1793, they totalled about 200.

The *Beutuebo* (between lat. 21° and 20°40′ S.) mentioned by Azara (1809, 2:104) are the same as the *Beuguiechos* of Castelnau (1850–59, 2:479) who had lived near the Paraguayan border and later migrated to Miranda.

● 114 101 **Abipón** (*Mepene, Eougina, Callagaic, Quiabanaité, Frentones*).—Azara (1809, 2:164) and Kersten (1905, p. 32) identify the *Mepene* (*Mapenues, Mapeni, Mepone*), a tribe of river pirates described by Schmidel (1903, p. 164), with the historical *Abipón*, whose name

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appears in the literature at the beginning of the 17th century. The *Mepene* lived somewhat to the south of the mouth of the Bermejo River in a region which, in the 17th and 18th centuries, was occupied by the *Abipón*. At that time the *Abipón* were not concerned with navigation, and nothing but a vague analogy in their respective names indicates a possible relationship between these two tribes. However, the name of one of the three *Abipón* subgroups, the *Yaaukanigá* (Water People), suggests that they may once have been canoe Indians and therefore identical with the *Mepene*. The *Yaaukanigá* were not originally an *Abipón* subtribe and even spoke a different language. It was only in the 17th century, after they had been defeated by the Spaniards, that the *Yaaukanigá* attached themselves to the *Abipón* and adopted their language.

The name *Callagaic* or *Callagá*, given to the *Abipón* by the *Toba* and *Mocoví*, had no connection with the name *Gulgaissen*, which designated a tribe more to the south.

History of the Abipón.—The original habitat of the *Abipón* was along the northern banks of the lower Bermejo River. Their expansion toward the south began in the 17th century after they had acquired the horse either from Spanish ranchers or from the *Calchaquí*. The *Abipón* first attacked the *Matará*, whom they obliged to migrate from the Bermejo River toward the Province of Santiago del Estero. According to Lozano (1941, p. 97), they helped the *Calchaquí*[1] when the latter, who had been deported or had migrated from the Calchaquí Valley (Salta), arose to regain their liberty. In the beginning of the 18th century, the *Abipón* fought against the same *Calchaquí*, who had settled north of Santa Fé, until the smallpox epidemic of 1718 almost wiped them out. Then the *Abipón*, no longer hampered by their rivals, turned against the Spanish settlements of Santa Fé.

In the first half of the 18th century, the *Abipón*, together with *Mocoví* and *Toba*, ranged over a vast area bounded on the north by the middle and lower course of the Bermejo River, on the east by the Paraná River, on the south by the Spanish settlements of Santa Fé and on the west by those of Córdoba and Santiago del Estero. Here the *Abipón* were continually moving from place to place. Dobrizhoffer (1784, 2:4) writes, "The Abipones imitate skilful chess-players. After committing slaughter in the southern colonies of the Spaniards, they retire far northwards, afflict the city of Asunción with murders and rapine, and then hurry back to the south. If they have committed hostilities against the towns of the Guaranies, or the city of Corrientes, they betake themselves to the west. But if the territories of Santiago or Córdoba have been the objects of their fury, they cunningly conceal themselves in the marshes, islands, and reedy places of the river Paraná." In 1751, a party of *Abipón* entered the city of Santa Fé, killing and looting.

[1] In 1665 Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta deported the Indians of the Calchaquí Valley to Buenos Aires. Lozano (1941, p. 96) states that these *Calchaquí* were different from those who lived on "ecomiendas" in the region of the Bermejo River. According to Del Techo and Lozano, *Calchaquí* had migrated into the Chaco to escape the oppression of the Spaniards. These refugees may have been those who rose against the Spaniards and formed an independent tribe north of Santa Fé about 1640. Two groups of *Calchaquí* near Santa Fé were the *Tocaque* and the *Colastiné*.